

AGENDA: April 13, 2004

7.2

CATEGORY: New Business

DEPT.: Community Services

TITLE: Field Inventory Study

RECOMMENDATION

Review findings from the Field Inventory Study and related comments from the Parks and Recreation Commission.

FISCAL IMPACT—None.

BACKGROUND

On May 13, 2003, the City Council asked that an analysis of the availability and allocation of playing fields be referred to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the findings of the Field Inventory Study performed by staff (Attachment 1, Staff Report) at its February 2004 meeting and provided comments (Attachment 2, Excerpt, Commission Meeting Minutes).

The scope of the study, as approved by the Commission in July 2003, included:

Inventory/Use Patterns/Annual Costs

Information regarding the size and location of existing athletic fields in Mountain View and their use by sport and age (Attachments 3 and 4) and specific use patterns and schedules (Attachment 5) were provided to the Commission. The fields are currently well used. Annual field maintenance cost is approximately \$15,000 per acre for regular mowing, fertilizing, irrigation, weed abatement, infield work, etc. Nonroutine large projects, such as the replacement of backstops/fence fabric, the recent renovation of the Crittenden soccer field, etc., are separate projects and are advanced as part of the City's Capital Improvement Program.

Field User Surveys

The surveys and their distribution process were approved by the Commission in July 2003. Three surveys were developed: one for the youth sports organizations, one for adult groups who regularly use the fields and one for the general public. The surveys were sent to the youth and adult groups. General public surveys were made available at key City buildings

(including the Community Center and Library) and at the athletic fields/parks. The survey was also posted on the City's web site. Press releases regarding the field survey and how to receive one were sent to the local newspapers.

- Youth Sports Groups Surveys

In general, the youth sports groups are pleased with the City's facilities and City services. It appears that the number and quality of facilities for the 12-and-under group are meeting the needs of the community. The inadequacies regarding the number and type of athletic fields noted by the youth sports groups are:

- Soccer field space for youth ages 15 to 18.
- Baseball diamond with 90' base paths.
- Football field.
- Lighted field.
- Baseball diamond with 60' base paths (assumes growth in the under 12 program).

(Attachment 6 provides a survey summary of youth sports group comments.)

- Adult Sports Groups Surveys

There are very few adult groups who use the City's fields on a regular basis, but more would if fields were available. There are very few Mountain View residents participating in the groups that responded to the survey. Two of the three groups who responded believe the field allocation is less than adequate. The response is not surprising as past and current City practice has been to accommodate City programs and youth sports organizations before adult groups. As a result, few fields remain for the adult groups. There was also mention of a need for more lighted fields.

(Attachment 7 provides a survey summary of adult sports group comments.)

- General Public Surveys

Most of those responding to the survey indicated the type of athletic fields provided by the City met their recreational interests and that they are available to them when needed most or all of the time. (Attachment 8 provides a survey summary of the general public's survey comments.)

Ancillary and/or Supplemental Facilities Needed

The youth sports groups are appreciative of the many amenities currently offered at the various sites (i.e., rest rooms, drinking fountains, dugouts, goalposts, etc.). The most repeated response to the question "What amenities would benefit your programs that are not currently provided?" was rest rooms. Six groups mentioned the need for rest rooms with Bubb, Huff and Slater noted as specifics. The general public survey also included two mentions of the need for rest rooms.

Other amenities desired by the youth groups included football goalposts, artificial turf, more skinned (nonturfed) infields, a soccer complex, soccer goals at Huff Elementary and burned soccer lines. Amenities desired by adult sports groups included two mentions of lighted fields and one for bases. Amenities desired by the general public included one mention each regarding the following: place to change clothes; basketball area near youth playground; and more soccer fields, especially with lights.

Short- and Long-Term Need/Demand

It appears that, in general, most field users in Mountain View are pleased with the City's facilities and the level of maintenance and support provided by the City. There are some concerns, however, about specific facilities both for the short and the long term. Fortunately, the development process for athletic facilities at Graham Middle School has begun. As noted below, the project will go a long way toward addressing many of the concerns voiced in the recent field inventory study, in particular:

Group	Need	Season	Potential to Accommodate Need at Graham
Mountain View Little League/Mountain View-Los Altos Pony Baseball	One 60' Baseball Diamond	March to July	Yes
ASYO/CYSA	One 70-yard x 110-yard Soccer Field	August to November for AYSO; Year-round for CYSA	Yes

Pop Warner Football	One 55-yard x 120-yard Football Field	September to December (Sundays only for games)	Yes
Mountain View Bobby Sox	One Skinned Softball Diamond (no turf in infield)	March to July	Yes

For the immediate short term, the major issue will be the provision of a baseball diamond with a 90' base path to replace what will be lost with the development of Graham Middle School. Provision of an additional lighted field for youth soccer and football (McKelvey and Crittenden are currently lighted) will also need to be further explored as well as the development of rest rooms at sites where none currently exist. (Construction of a rest room at Bubb Park is included in the approved Capital Improvement Program and meetings with the neighbors have begun.) The Commission has previously gone on record as supporting and promoting the development of rest rooms at City parks that include athletic facilities and, as funding becomes available, these projects will be advanced through the City's Capital Improvement Program. Other long-term needs could include: the development of additional athletic fields to better serve the adult sports groups, although at this time Mountain View resident participation is low; growing interest in field space for middle/high school "club" lacrosse and rugby; and field space for spring soccer.

Commissioners' Comments

The Parks and Recreation Commissioners asked a number of questions and offered various observations (Attachment 2, Commission Meeting Minutes, Excerpt). The Commission agreed that the report provided the information requested and was a good base upon which to build. Further discussions regarding where additional fields might be located, emerging sports and their impact on field use, use of field space on private school/corporate grounds, prioritization of needs, costs, etc. is important. The Commission believed these issues and others could be further examined, considered and developed as part of the Commission's work with the upcoming Parks and Open Space Plan Review and/or Recreation Plan should the latter ultimately be approved by Council. The Commission looks forward to further pursuit of the Field Inventory Study issues as part of its work with these two studies. For the immediate future, the Parks and Recreation Commission is concerned about the loss of the baseball diamond (with 90' base path) at Graham and encouraged staff to continue to be proactive concerning a replacement. Possible options for this season being explored by staff include use of a field at Mountain View High School or Moffett Field. Both of these options are in the discussion stage and will be further pursued during the next few months.

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SUMMARY

On May 13, 2003, the City Council asked that an analysis of the availability and allocation of playing fields be referred to the Parks and Recreation Commission. Information concerning the inventory of existing playing fields in the community, use patterns and schedules for each, a summary of annual field repair and/or improvement costs, preparation and distribution of a field user survey, ancillary and/or supplemental facilities needed, and short- and long-term need/demand were investigated and presented. The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the findings in February 2004 and presents comments to the City Council.

AGENDA POSTING

Agenda posting. In addition, meeting notices were sent to groups and individuals who regularly rent field space in Mountain View, the Mountain View-Whisman School District as well as the following youth sports organizations: Mountain View Babe Ruth, Mountain View Little League, Mountain View-Los Altos Pony Baseball, Mountain View Bobby Sox, AYSO, CYSA, Pop Warner Football and YMCA. General public survey respondents who provided address information were also sent a copy of the notice. Notices in English and Spanish were also posted at the various athletic fields.

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Attachments: 1. Staff Report
2. Commission Meeting Minutes Excerpt
3. Inventory of Existing Play Fields and Athletic Facilities: Dimensions

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4. Inventory of Existing Play Fields and Athletic Facilities: Use by Sport/Age
5. Master Schedule
6. Youth Sports Survey Summary
7. Adult Sports Survey Summary
8. General Public Survey Summary